

A Qualitative Approach to the Role of Board of Management, School Climate and Teachers' Morale as Determinants of Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Marani Sub-County, Kenya

Ogamba John King'oina

Abstract

The Kenya government is keen on ensuring pupils excel in their academic work. Some of the progressive steps the government has taken are enhancing access to education by providing free primary education and waiving of national examination registration fees for all pupils undertaking basic education. Even with such continued support from the government, primary schools in Marani Sub-County have performed dismally in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination with accumulative mean score of 225.76 for the last five years. Due to the poor performance, the current study was thus conducted to establish the role of BoM as a determinant of pupils' academic performance; investigate the school climate as a determinant of pupils' academic performance; and examine teachers' morale as a determinant of pupils' academic performance, in public primary schools in Marani Sub-County. The study utilized descriptive survey design. The target population was 317 Standard Eight teachers, 64 head teachers and 64 BoM chairpersons in 64 public primary schools. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select schools and categories of respondents. The sample size was 95 Standard Eight teachers, 19 head teachers, and 19 BoM chairpersons which represented 30% of the target population. Questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers and head teachers whereas interview schedule was used to collect data from BoM chairpersons. Document analysis was carried out at Marani Sub-County Education Office to assist in extracting KCPE examination mean scores. The KCPE examination was used because it was standardized and administered to Standard Eight pupils in primary schools. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages and means) while qualitative data was arranged into categories and interpreted based on themes derived from research objectives. The results revealed that majority of schools' BoM did not manage disciplinary matters, promote culture of dialogue and democratic governance, participate in guidance and counseling and manage resources. There was also uncondusive schools' climate due to inadequate facilities, negative pupil-teacher relations and inadequate capacity development programmes for teachers. Teachers' morale was low as exhibited by their absenteeism, irregular attendance to class lessons, unwilling to conduct pupils' remedial teaching, and non-participation in class assessment activity. The study found out that when the means of the role of BoM, school climate and teachers' morale were high, the mean scores of pupils' academic achievement in KCPE were also high and vice versa. The overall means of role of BoM, school climate and teachers' morale were 2.40, 2.33, and 2.43 respectively whereas the overall mean of KCPE examination was 231.76, an indication that the means scores of the study variables were low. Based on the study findings, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) should regularly mount capacity building programmes to schools' BoM so as to boost their role performance; The schools BoM should undertake resource mobilization exercise to ensure adequate facilities; Head teachers should ensure there is positive pupil-teacher relationship in schools and all stakeholders are involved in decision making; Teachers should report to schools regularly and attend to all class lessons as timetabled. They should also be encouraged to have positive attitude towards preparation of teaching and learning materials.